

REMARKS

The present Amendment is in response to the Office Action dated December 3, 2001, whose period has been restarted to commence from January 7, 2002. In view of the foregoing amendments and the following comments, favorable reconsideration is respectfully requested.

In paragraphs 3 and 4 of the Office Action, the Examiner rejects claims 1 and 4, and claims 2 and 3, respectively, over the combinations of Adachi, Kawai and Glennon, and Adachi, Kawai, Glennon and Schonfelder. In the final rejection which is under appeal, claims 1-4 were rejected over the combination of Adachi and Glennon only. Therefore, the Kawai and Schonfelder references are newly added at the present time.

It appears that the Examiner relies upon Kawai only for its teaching of flat stator coils in an automotive alternator context, as best shown in Figure 2 of the reference. There is no indication in the reference that the coil ends may lie flat close to or against the stator core, and, indeed, from Figure 1, it appears that such is not the case.

The Schonfelder patent has been cited to show stator teeth having a longitudinal split, somewhat similar to the splits 91k according to the invention. Schonfelder splits the teeth in order to create a damping effect which tends to reduce resonant vibration of the teeth during generator operation.

Applicant submits that the Kawai and Schonfelder references do not add significantly to the Examiner's position, particularly as regards independent claim 1. Neither of the new references appear to be relevant to a preformed stator coil, particularly a preformed coil where the coil ends contact the stator core without substantial gaps. Further, the splits shown in Schonfelder's stator teeth are provided for a completely different functional reason, and the teeth are not altered from the prefinished state to the finished state.

In paragraphs 5 and 6 of the Office Action, the Examiner has set forth a pair of alternative §103 rejections. Here, the Glennon reference is no longer used and the Fujiwara reference has been substituted. Other than the noted substitution, the rejections of paragraphs 5 and 6 appear to be the same as the rejections of paragraphs 3 and 4 discussed above.

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The Fujiwara reference appears to be somewhat relevant to the invention in that it discloses stator coils which are intended to contact the stator core in the assembled state. In this particular stator, insulating films 6, 7 are first disposed on the core before the coil 12 is installed. The coil ends 12a appear to be somewhat “bent over” in order to contact the core. It is not possible from the drawings of this reference to determine the actual construction of the coils, although the stator construction itself appears to be conventional.

Although the Fujiwara reference may be somewhat more relevant than the Glennon patent for the “contact” or “close to” feature, it still does not address the ability to form such a construction using preformed coils and a prefinished core. Indeed, Fujiwara appears to teach nothing at all regarding the use of either preformed coils or a prefinished core. This is important in the present context because, prior to the invention, preformed stator coils could not be assembled to stator cores without significant gaps there between, without damage to the coils. See page 5, lines 11-33 of Applicant’s specification. There is no teaching whatever that Fujiwara’s coils are preformed. Thus, to this extent, Fujiwara teaches away from Adachi

Moreover, absent any evidence at all that the Examiner’s combination of references could overcome, or even address this issue, there is no motivation to combine the two teachings, and, indeed, no indication whatever that the two references could be successfully combined, even if one were to attempt to do so. A proper §103 rejection requires both of these indicators, i.e., motivation to combine and a reasonable expectation of success. For this reason, the Examiner’s §103 rejection clearly fails.

Owing to the clear failure of the presently-constituted rejection to approach the claimed invention, Applicant has amended claim 1 in order to broaden that claim to a degree. The claim no longer requires direct contact with the axial end surfaces of the stator, but instead requires only that the surfaces of the bridge portions be placed “at least close to” the stator surfaces. Absent the existence of a prior art reference even remotely teaching how such a configuration would be possible with preformed coils and a prefinished core, Applicant submits that claim 1 and the remaining claims are clearly distinguished from the prior art and entitled to patentability.

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In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

Applicant hereby petitions for any extension of time which may be required to maintain the pendency of this case, and any required fee, except for the Issue Fee, for such extension is to be charged to Deposit Account No. 19-4880.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Richard C. Turner', written over a horizontal line.

Richard C. Turner
Registration No. 29,710

SUGHRUE MION, PLLC
2100 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20037-3213
Telephone: (202) 293-7060
Facsimile: (202) 293-7860

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